College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies
The American Horror Film
FIL 6588-006 / CRN: 95385
3 Credit Hours

Instructor
Dr. Amy Rust, Associate Professor
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Day / Time / Location
T / R: 2 – 3: 15 pm
EDU 347

Term
Fall 2022
August 22, 2022 – December 9, 2022

Office Hours
Microsoft Teams
W: 9 – 10 am, or by appointment

Course Description
This course takes stock of the horror genre, from its early influences in European modernism to its more recent appearances in contemporary cinema and television.

Overview
A survey of the American horror film, this course explores its main currents and multiple variations, including its early interest in monsters and mad scientists, its post-1960 turn toward psycho killers and internal possessions, and its recent turn to technology and torture. To this end, students interrogate the horror genre's signal characteristics: What kinds of threats does it depict and how do these change over time? How do different subgenres respond to these threats? What effects do horror films produce in their spectators? Why do viewers find these sensations so unpleasurably pleasurable? What kinds of "cultural work" does the horror film do? To answer such questions, the course carefully analyzes films from horror's "classic" era, its various convergences with science fiction and film noir, and its secularization in the slasher film, familial horror, and so-called "torture porn." It also investigates horror cinema's engagement with other media, including photography, video, television, and digital technologies. Selections from the Course Reader contribute to our discussions with texts that take up the history of the horror genre, its narrative structures, formal styles, and spectatorial pleasures, as well as its links to larger social and cultural concerns, including race, class, gender, and sexuality.

1

Course Objectives
- Introduce students to the narrative and aesthetic principles that define the horror genre across multiple media throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
- Demonstrate the ways in which the horror genre's audiovisual expressions reveal and respond to the social, economic, and cultural contexts of its production.
- Teach students to analyze written and visual texts through a variety of written assignments, including close reading assignments, essay exams, and argumentative papers.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students are able to
- Describe the historical forces that helped shape the horror film, including industrial / technological and social / cultural influences.
- Explain the ways in which the horror film's audiovisual expressions reveal and respond to the social, economic, and cultural contexts of their production, particularly as these relate to issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality.
- Articulate the fundamental aesthetic and technological forms of horror cinema.
- Compare, evaluate, and analyze written and visual texts through close reading assignments, essay exams, and argumentative papers.

Required Texts
Clover, Carol J. *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. ISBN-10: 0691166293. Available through the Textbook Affordability Project at http://ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/login?url=https:// ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/usf/detail.action?docID=1910581. **(CLOVER)**

Course Reader, available in PDF format on the Canvas course site. **(CR)**

Required Films
All titles are available on the Canvas course site.

Warning about Graphic Material
The very subject of this course means that it explores graphically violent material. Students unprepared to seriously engage with such depictions should not enroll in the course.

Assignments & Grading

Category	Percent of Final Grade
Attendance & Participation	10%
Online Responses	25%
Weekly Quizzes	15%
Conference Paper	30%
Final Exam	20%

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION
Dr. Rust takes attendance at each and every class meeting through an online Canvas survey. **All students should download the Canvas app to their phones.** Upon entering the classroom, students navigate to that day's survey, which is located in the module

for a given week. A password will be provided at the start of class. **All surveys close at 2:10 pm.** Students who miss the survey will be marked tardy or absent. It is the responsibility of tardy students to alert Dr. Rust of their presence at the end of class.

Students are permitted **THREE unexcused absences** for the duration of the course. (An *excused* absence is EITHER an absence approved by Dr. Rust *prior to* the class in question OR an absence justified by documentation such as a doctor's note *after* the fact.) Attendance & Participation grades are lowered **THREE points** for each additional unexcused absence. Habitual tardiness is not tolerated. For this reason, **THREE tardies = ONE unexcused absence.**

Class meetings demand careful in-class analyses of scheduled films and readings. Participation is crucial. At the end of each session, Dr. Rust assigns each student a score, based on the following scale: 0 = did not attend; 1 = attended but did not engage at an appropriate level; 2 = engaged at an appropriate level; 3 = exhibited superlative engagement. At the end of the term, these scores are added and scaled.

NOTE: Students may contribute to classroom discussion through emailed comments and questions and / or office hours appointments.

ONLINE RESPONSES
Graduate students complete **FIVE** Online Responses of their choice for the term. Online Responses are due on **Thursdays @ Noon.** Late responses are **not** accepted.

To complete your response, navigate to the Graduate Online Response assignment in the module for a given week. Each assignment includes a Screening Question and Clip, both of which should be used to compose a response of *no more* and *no less* than **400 – 450 words.** *Detailed evidence from the clip and course readings must support any claims.*

A rubric for Online Responses is located on the Canvas assignment page.

WEEKLY QUIZZES
At the end of each week, students complete a **10-point, 15-minute** online quiz. It covers **all** material for a given week, including readings, lectures, films, and in-class discussions. Weekly Quizzes are due on **Sundays @ 11:59 pm.**

Quizzes are open book and open note. **TWO** attempts are permitted for each quiz. At the end of the term, only your **TWELVE BEST** quiz scores count toward your final grade.

Late quizzes are **not** accepted.

CONFERENCE PAPER
Graduate students research and write an original conference presentation of **15 to 20 minutes** (roughly, **2400 to 3200 words**) on a topic relevant to the American horror film, accompanied by an **annotated bibliography** that summarizes no less than **SIX** scholarly sources. Only **TWO** of the sources you summarize may come from the Course Reader. You need **not** cite all six sources in the Conference Paper itself.

Conference Papers are due to Canvas by **Wednesday, November 23,** at **11:59 pm.** Feel free to consult the **video instructions** inside the modules for Weeks 8, 10, 11, and 13.

FINAL EXAM
In Class **Tuesday, December 6,** from **12:30** to **2:30 pm.** It is cumulative and includes Matching, True / False, Multiple Choice, Short Answers, and an Essay.

GRADING
The following scale applies to all assignments and final grades:

Grading Scale (%)	
93-100	A
90 – 92	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
77 – 79	C+
73 – 76	C
70 – 72	C-
67 – 69	D+
63 – 66	D
60 – 62	D-
0 – 59	F

Course Schedule

WEEK 1 / Origins of the American Horror Film

Date	Before Class	After Class
23 Aug	**Read** • Course Syllabus	**Complete** • Syllabus Quiz **DUE:** 26 Aug @ 11:59 pm
25 Aug	**Read** • German Expressionism: A Brief Overview (CR) • Surrealism: A Brief Overview (CR) **View** • Excerpt from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, Germany, 1919) • *Un chien andalou* (Luis Buñuel & Salvador Dalí, France, 1929)	**Complete** • Week 1 Quiz **DUE:** 28 Aug @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 2 / Classifying What's "Classic" About Horror

Date	Before Class	After Class
30 Aug	**Read** • Sigmund Freud, excerpt from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (CR) **View** • *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960; 109m)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 2* **DUE:** 1 Sept @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
1 Sept	**Read** • Andrew Tudor, Chapter 2 (CR) • Linda Williams, "Discipline and Fun" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 2 Quiz **DUE:** 4 Sept @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 3 / The Horror of (Not) Knowing: Monsters & Mad Scientists

Date	Before Class	After Class
6 Sept	**Read** • Noël Carroll, "Why Horror?" (CR) • Sigmund Freud, excerpt from "The Uncanny" (CR) **View** • *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931; 71m)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 3* **DUE:** 8 Sept @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
8 Sept	**Read** • Andrew Tudor, pp. 27 – 33 + pp. 81 - 90 (CR) • Robert Spadoni, "*Frankenstein* and the Vats of Hollywood" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 3 Quiz **DUE:** 11 Sept @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 4 / Space Invaders, Part I: Horror in the 1950s

Date	Before Class	After Class
13 Sept	**Read** • Andrew Tudor, pp. 39 – 47 + pp. 90 – 95 (CR) • Vivian Sobchack, "Transylvania on Mars" (CR) **View** • *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956; 80m)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 4* **DUE:** 15 Sept @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
15 Sept	**Read** • Natania Meeker & Antónia Szabari, "From the Century of the Pods to the Century of the Plants" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 4 Quiz **DUE:** 18 Sept @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 5 / Space Invaders, Part II: The Monstrous (Feminine) Body

Date	Before Class	After Class
20 Sept	**Read** • Barbara Creed, "Kristeva, Femininity, Abjection" (CR) • Julia Kristeva, excerpt from "Approaching Abjection," (CR) **View** • *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979; 117m)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 5* **DUE:** 22 Sept @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
22 Sept	**Read** • Caetlin Benson-Allott, "Dreadful Architecture" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 5 Quiz **DUE:** 25 Sept @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 6 / The Psychotic '70s

Date	Before Class	After Class
27 Sept	**Read** • Georges Bataille, excerpt from *Eroticism* (CR) **View** • *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978; 93m)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 6* **DUE:** 29 Sept @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
29 Sept	**Read** • Andrew Tudor, 67 – 78 (CR) • CLOVER, Introduction & Chapter 1	**Complete** • Week 6 Quiz **DUE:** 2 Oct @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 7 / A Queer Turn on the Final Girl + Midterm Exam

Date	Before Class	After Class
4 Oct	**Read** • CLOVER, pp. 166 - 181 • Harry M. Benshoff, "The Monster and the Homosexual" (CR) **View** • Excerpts from *Peeping Tom* (Michael Powell, Great Britain, 1960) • *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* (Jack Sholder, 1985; 87m)	**Complete** Week 7 Quiz **DUE:** 9 Oct @ 11:59 pm
6 Oct	**NO CLASS**	

WEEK 8 / "They Won't Stay Dead!": Zombies & Unexpected Returns

Date	Before Class	After Class
11 Oct	**Read** • Andrew Tudor, 33 – 38 (CR) • Andrew Tudor, 96 – 104 (CR) • Sarah Juliet Lauro & Karen Embry, "A Zombie Manifesto" (CR) **View** • *Night of the Living Dead* (George A. Romero, 1968; 96m) • Developing Your Paper Topic	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 8* **DUE:** 13 Oct @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
13 Oct	**Read** • Aaron Pinnix, "*Night of the Living Dead* Dissects the News" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 8 Quiz **DUE:** 16 Oct @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 9 / Horror Noire: Contemporary Black Horror

Date	Before Class	After Class
18 Oct	**Read** • Gabrielle Bellot, "How Black Horror Became America's Most Powerful Cinematic Genre" (CR) • Linnie Blake, "Burning Down the House" (CR) **View** • *Us* (Jordan Peele, 2019; 116m)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 9* **DUE:** 20 Oct @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
20 Oct	**Read** • Christina Sharpe, "The Weather" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 9 Quiz **DUE:** 23 Oct @ 11:59 pm

WEEK 10 / Between Science and Superstition: Possession as Paranoia

Date	Before Class	After Class
25 Oct	**Read** • Andrew Tudor, Chapter 10 (CR) • Eugenie Brinkema, "10 Points to Begin" (CR) **View** • *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973; 121m) • Writing Your Thesis	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 10* **DUE:** 27 Oct @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
27 Oct	**Read** • CLOVER, Chapter 2	**Complete** • Week 10 Quiz **DUE:** 30 Oct @ 11:59 pm

Week 11 / Familial Horror: Bad Dads & Children of the Night

Date	Before Class	After Class
1 Nov	**Read** • Vivian Sobchack, "Bringing It All Back Home" (CR) **View** • *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980; 143m) • Working with Evidence	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 11* **DUE:** 3 Nov @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
3 Nov	**Read** • Kian Bergstrom, "Thoughts on Reading *The Shining*" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 11 Quiz **DUE:** 6 Nov @ 11:59 pm

Week 12 / Post-Horror: The Forms of Inheritance

Date	Before Class	After Class
8 Nov	**Read** • Eugenie Brinkema, "Horrere Or" (CR) **View** • *Hereditary* (Ari Aster, 2018; 127m)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 12* **DUE:** 10 Nov @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
10 Nov	**Read** • David Church, "Grief, Mourning, and Horrors of Familial Inheritance" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 12 Quiz **DUE:** 13 Nov @ 11:59 pm

Week 13 / You Know That They Know That We Know: Postmodern Horror

Date	Before Class	After Class
15 Nov	**Read** • Philip Brophy, "Horrality" (CR) **View** • *American Psycho* (Mary Harron, 2000; 103m) • Completing Your Paper	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 13* **DUE:** 17 Nov @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
17 Nov	**Read** • Mark Seltzer, "The Serial Killer as a Type of Person" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 13 Quiz **DUE:** 20 Nov @ 11:59 pm

Week 14 / PAPER + THANKSGIVING BREAK

Date		
22 Nov	**NO CLASS**	
23 Nov	**PAPER DUE** 23 Nov @ 11:59 pm	
24 Nov	**NO CLASS**	

Week 15 / Technology & Torture in Contemporary Horror

Date	Before Class	After Class
29 Nov	**Read** • Jason Middleton, "The Subject of Torture" (CR) **View** • *Saw* (James Wan, 2004; 103m) • Trailer for *Bug* (William Friedkin, 2006)	**Complete** Online Responses → Week 15* **DUE:** 1 Dec @ Noon *Graduate Students complete a total of **FIVE** online responses of their choice
1 Dec	**Read** • Amy Rust, "Plugging In and *Bug*ging Out" (CR)	**Complete** • Week 15 Quiz **DUE:** 4 Dec @ 11:59 pm

Week 16 / Finals Week

6 Dec	**FINAL EXAM** 12:30 – 2:30 pm

Course Policies

First Day Attendance

Students must attend class in person on **Tuesday, August 23,** to avoid being dropped from the course.

Late Assignments

Late Assignments are accepted, *except where indicated*, with a penalty of **one grade step** for **each day** late until the assignment reaches 59 / 100 points. Contact Dr. Rust *in advance* of deadlines to negotiate the submission of late work without penalty.

Incomplete (I) Grades

This course follows current university policy concerning incomplete grades. An "I" grade may be awarded to a student only when a small portion of the student's work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade. The time limit for removing the "I" is to be set by Dr. Rust. For undergraduate students, this time limit may not exceed two academic semesters, whether or not the student is in residence, and/or graduation, whichever comes first. For graduate students, this time limit may not exceed one academic semester. "I" grades not removed by the end of the time limit are changed to "IF" or "IU," whichever is appropriate.

Assignment Retention

Students are responsible for maintaining electronic copies of all work uploaded to Canvas until final grades post.

Turnitin.com

The automated system Turnitin.com is used in this course. It compares student assignments with billions of websites and a database of student papers. After an assignment is processed, Dr. Rust receives a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process, visit http://www.turnitin.com.

<u>Recordings</u>
In this class, software may be used to record live class lectures and discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded. These recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the class.

<u>Student Evaluations</u>
All classes at USF make use of an online system through which students provide feedback to the University regarding courses. Surveys are made available at the end of the semester, and the University notifies students by email when the response window opens. Your participation is encouraged and valued.

<u>Important Dates</u>
Dates in the Course Schedule are subject to change. Visit http://www.usf.edu/registrar/calendars/ for USF's academic calendar. The last day to **Add / Drop** this course is **Friday, August 26.** The last day to withdraw is **Friday, October 29.**

University Policies
<u>COVID19</u>
Vaccines: USF strongly encourages vaccines, and boosters, where recommended, for all vaccine-preventable diseases. Student Health Services on all three USF campuses offers the COVID vaccine and boosters and the annual flu shot to students for no cost / low-cost medical services covered by student fees. Call (813) 974-2331 for an appointment.

Testing: Anyone with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose) or who may have been exposed to COVID-19 or the flu should get tested for these diseases as treatments are available and isolation may be warranted to prevent the spread of disease to others. USF offers COVID-19 testing for students through Student Health Services. Call (813) 974-2331 for an appointment. Students who test positive should notify Dr. Rust immediately to arrange accommodations.

Masks: Individuals may choose to wear a mask on USF campuses.

<u>Academic Integrity</u>
Academic integrity is the foundation of the University of South Florida's commitment to the academic honesty and personal integrity of its university community. Academic integrity is grounded in certain fundamental values, which include honesty, respect, and fairness. Broadly defined, academic honesty is the completion of all academic endeavors and claims of scholarly knowledge as representative of one's own efforts. Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism (using the words and / or ideas of others without attribution), and submitting the same work for more than one assignment in more than one course. Plagiarism need not be intentional. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult Dr. Rust in advance of assignment deadlines. The process for faculty reporting of academic misconduct, as well as the student's options for appeal, are outlined in detail in USF Regulation 3.027.

<u>Academic Accommodation</u>
Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Students Accessibility

Services (SAS) (SVC 1133) in order to receive academic accommodations. SAS encourages students to notify instructors of accommodation needs at least five (5) business days prior to needing the accommodation. A letter from SAS must accompany this request. Please visit the [Student Accessibility Services website](#) for more information.

Disruption to Academic Progress
Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Disruption of the academic process ([USF Regulation 3.025](#)) is defined as the act, words, or general conduct of a student in a classroom or other academic environment which in the reasonable estimation of the instructor: (a) directs attention away from the academic matters at hand, such as noisy distractions, persistent, disrespectful or abusive interruption of lecture, exam, academic discussion, or general University operations, or (b) presents a danger to the health, safety, or well-being of self or other persons.

Sexual Misconduct / Sexual Harassment
USF is committed to providing an environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence ([USF Policy 0-004](#)). The USF Center for Victim Advocacy is a confidential resource where you can talk about incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. This confidential resource can help you without having to report your situation to the Title IX Office unless you request that they make a report. Contact the [USF Center for Victim Advocacy](#): 813-974-5757. Please be aware that in compliance with Title IX and under the USF Policy, educators must report incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. If you disclose any of these situations personally to an educator, he or she is required to report it to the Title IX Office. For more information about Title IX, a full list of resources, or to report incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship violence or stalking visit: [usf.edu/title-ix](#).

Intellectual Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity Act (House Bill 233)
Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the [USF Student Conduct Code](#).

Campus Free Expression Act (House Bill 7)
It is fundamental to the University of South Florida's mission to support an environment in which divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies are openly exchanged and critically evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussions of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive. In the classroom, ideas

are presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. Objective means that the ideas presented are supported by credible research and critical peer review. This course asks you to engage with complex ideas and demonstrate your understanding of those ideas. Understanding an idea does not mean that you are required to believe it or agree with it.

Religious Observances
All students have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices, and beliefs (USF Policy 10-045). The University of South Florida, through its faculty, will make every attempt to schedule required classes and examinations in view of customarily observed religious holidays of those religious groups or communities comprising USF's constituency. Students are expected to attend classes and take examinations as determined by the university. No student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time prohibited by his or her religious belief. However, students should review the course requirements and meeting days and times to avoid foreseeable conflicts, as excessive absences in a given term may prevent a student from completing the academic requirements of a specific course. Students are expected to notify their instructors at the beginning of each academic term if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with this Policy.

Food and Housing Insecurity
We recognize that student facing financial difficulty in securing a stable place to live and / or in affording sufficient groceries may be at risk of these financial issues affecting their performance in classes. Students with these needs are urged to contact Feed-A-Bull (feedabull@usf.edu or their website), or Student Outreach and Support (socat@usf.edu or their website).

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to: Canvas, Teams, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Canvas for each class for course-specific communication, and the USF, College, and Department websites, emails, and ALERTUSF messages for important general information (USF Policy 6-010).

Canvas Technical Support
Students experiencing technical difficulties with Canvas may refer to the "Canvas Help" page on the course homepage. They may also contact the Canvas help desk by calling (813) 974-1222 or emailing help@usf.edu.